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SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: ENGAGEMENT WITH DUTCH ON TIP

REF: A. STATE 115541

[B](#). THE HAGUE 01446

[1](#). SUMMARY: During a June 29 working level meeting to discuss Dutch movement on TIP following G/TIP Director Miller's June 7 visit, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and Ministry of Justice (MinJus) officials promised Embassy representatives close cooperation bilaterally and within the EU on Trafficking In Persons (TIP) efforts. At the same time, they continued to push-back on benchmarks (outlined reftel A) and the November deadline for re-evaluation. The Dutch accepted U.S. proposals to create a document outlining agreed steps for bilateral action on TIP. END SUMMARY.

[2](#). Working-level MFA and MinJus officials met with Embassy representatives on June 29 to discuss follow-up action to G/TIP Director John Miller's June 7 meeting with MFA and MinJus Ministers Bot and Donner (reftel B). Initially, Dutch representatives echoed the Ministers' concerns about lack of U.S. respect for Dutch "sovereignty" and the unilateral imposition of U.S. - not Dutch - TIP priorities under the benchmarks. Still, they sought continuous bilateral engagement to make Dutch national priorities clear. The Dutch accepted the U.S. proposal to draft jointly a document on agreed bilateral steps, modeled after an existing document underlying successful U.S./Dutch bilateral engagement on law enforcement issues. The U.S. accepted a Dutch proposal to establish monthly working group meetings on both Dutch and U.S. TIP activities, and agreed to meet again on August 9.

National Efforts

[3](#). On June 29, the Second Chamber (Lower House) of Parliament adopted TIP legislation proposed by the Justice Ministry that expands the definition of trafficking to include labor trafficking and raises the maximum penalties for violations to 15 years. The bill was sent to the First Chamber (Upper House) under an expedited procedure, and GONL representatives expect the legislation to be in place by August 1, 2004, in accordance with the EU deadline.

[4](#). The Justice Ministry submitted an Action Plan entitled "Regulation and Protection of the Prostitution Sector" to Parliament on July 2. The Justice Ministry had promised delivery of the document to Parliament following the November, 2003 parliamentary debate on the effects of legalized prostitution. The plan is designed to improve controls in the prostitution sector and touches on TIP issues, including the "loverboy" problem. The new controls include the development by brothel owners of a quality label ensuring brothel compliance with legal standards (such as refusing to employ TIP and underage victims; providing health services, and meeting safety requirements); model contracts for prostitutes and brothel owners; a national register of licensed brothel owners; and support for prostitutes seeking other means of employment. MFA officials expect Parliament to discuss the Action Plan in September, and a report evaluating actions taken in response to the plan to follow next year. Post will provide a detailed summary and evaluation of the report septel.

[5](#). The National Rapporteur's Office will publish its Third Report, using official 2002 TIP figures, in July, and will publish a supplement with official 2003 figures before the end of the year.

[6](#). Embassy officials also met with a director of the Judicial Training Center on June 25. He offered to provide the Embassy with the course outline and training materials from the center's on-going, two-day TIP training courses for prosecutors and judges.

Efforts Within The EU

[7](#). MFA representatives expressed interest in pushing joint U.S./EU TIP efforts in the Balkans, particularly given Dutch government plans to fund an International Office of Migration (IOM) victim awareness program and an OSCE economic empowerment program aimed at the prevention of TIP in the Balkans. The GONL proposals will provide approximately one million euros for each program.

[8](#). The Dutch government decided to make TIP a priority during

their EU Presidency. The EU Commission's Expert Group on Human Trafficking is scheduled to release its final recommendations for EU TIP efforts in October 2004, and MFA officials indicated they would work with the Commission to introduce the recommendations in an informal working group during the Dutch EU Presidency. Dutch officials expect the new Commission - which will not be in place until November - to review the recommendations early next year. Although the Dutch do not feel they can launch any TIP initiatives until the Commission weighs in on the Expert Group recommendations, they plan to take advantage of their special relationship with Luxembourg to put TIP on the Luxembourg Presidency agenda.

19. COMMENT: MFA and MinJus officials are still bristling from the U.S. Continuing Action Plan benchmarks (reftel A), and view the TIP criteria set out in the Continuing Action Plan as reflecting U.S. priorities, not their own. The Dutch commitment to combating TIP remains strong, however, as demonstrated by Dutch acceptance of the U.S. proposal to draft agreed bilateral steps, the Dutch Action Plan on legalized prostitution, and Dutch proposals to fund TIP programs in the Balkans. Though they insist on the right to define their national TIP priorities, the Dutch are proud of, and committed to, their efforts to combat TIP. END COMMENT. SOBEL